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## Amendments to the Claims:

This claim listing will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

## Claim Listing:

- 1. (currently amended) A composition for inhibiting specific gene expression with reduced side effects, the composition comprising a modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide containing a modified CpG dinucleotide wherein the oligonucleotide that is complementary to a portion of a genomic region or gene for which inhibition of expression is desired, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, and wherein the modified CpG is racemic and is selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG, phosphotriester CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, and 2'-5' CpG.
- 2. (canceled)
- 3. (currently amended) A method for providing a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide with reduced side effects of splenomegaly and depletion of platelets when administered to a mammal, comprising administering to the mammal a composition comprising a modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide that is complementary to a portion of a genomic region or gene for which inhibition of expression is desired, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, wherein the modified CpG is selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG, phosphotriester CpG, stereospecific phosphorothioate CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, inverted CpG and 2'-5' CpG according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a gene that is being expressed in the mammal.
- 4. (currently amended) A method for providing c CpG- containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide, with reduced side effects, to an individual with a disease caused by aberrant gene expression, the method comprising administering to an individual having the disease a composition comprising a modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide that is complementary to a portion of a genomic region or gene that is aberrantly expressed, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, wherein the modified CpG is selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG,

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phosphotriester CpG, stereospecific phosphorothioate CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, inverted CpG and 2'-5' CpG according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a gene that is aberrantly expressed, wherein such aberrant expression causes the disease.

- 5. (currently amended) A method for reducing side effects of a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide administered to a mammal, comprising:
  - (a) providing a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide having a racemic CpG modification selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, inverted CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG, stereospecific phosphorothioate CpG, phosphotriester CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, and 2'-5' CpG; and
  - (b) administering the modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide to the mammal,

wherein administration of the modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide results in fewer side effects that the administration of an unmodified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide.

6. – 15. (canceled)